

WOMEN IN BANYUMAS LOCAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in *Banyumas* politics is an interesting object to be studied, especially if it is related to Banyumas culture. As the transition culture between Javanese and Sundanese culture, Banyumas culture have egalitarian values. It has relatively loose social structure compared to Javanese and Sundanese social structure. Thus, the position of women in Banyumas traditional society is quite unique. While it still reflects the values of patriarchy, there is space for women to play important roles. It is shown in politics under New Order Regime, that there was only few numbers of Banyumas women legislators. However, in Reform Era, the number is increasing. Unfortunately, most of them do not play prominent roles, neither in parliament as their presentation of the people nor in the political parties. Actually, in the patriarchal environment, there are still hopes for women to take parts in politics. It was proven by assigning qualified women in the top positions in the candidates list, the party board, and the legislative structure. The low level of women political representation as an effect of the culture of patriarchy is probably due to the fact that the value of egalitarianism in Banyumas culture untouched the area of women's political role. However, there is still space in Banyumas patriarchal values if it is compared to Javanese and Sundanese cultures which are highly patriarchal.

KEYWORDS: Banyumas Culture, local Politics, Egalitarian Values, Women

INTRODUCTION

When Indonesian politics changed from New Order Regime to Reform era, the issue about women in politics was one of important issues. This issue is one of the main issues happening when this country started to reform political institutions or political processes because of democracy. The reformation of political institutions or political processes emerged during Reform Era is in line with political phenomena talking about the identity of politics, for example, women, ethnics, religion, locality, and et cetera.

Because of the issue of women in politics getting stronger, the purpose of this paper is to find out the phenomenon of the representation of women in local area and its dispute with the local values of culture. Therefore, this study investigates the phenomenon of women as political representatives in a local area, Banyumas, in Central Java and its dispute with cultural values. It is known that since centuries, culture especially patriarchy culture is the reason why women are difficult to have role in public domain. This proves that women representation in political area, indeed, influenced by culture as the dispute between them, women representation and culture, cannot be denied.

Furthermore, this study uses qualitative method with *decriptive-explanatory* (Lawrence Newman, 1994:14-19). Snowball technique re used to choose and classify the informant (Lisa Harrison, 2007: 25). Besides, the way to collect the data is conducted through deeper interview, document study, and observation (Keith Punch, 2006:52). Finally, tabulation and analysis are done when the data are collected simultaneously, started by clarifying data, theoretical abstraction, until the basic statement are formed (David M Silbergh, 2001: 173).

The Women Role and Position in Banyumas Culture

There are two meaning of Banyumas. The first is Banyumas as the administrative area. Based on this, Banyumas is a name of regency in Central Java Province located in the south-west of Central Java Capital, in the border between Central Java and West Java province. The second, the meaning of Banyumas is about culture which is formed as the mixture of two big cultures, Javanese and Sundanese. Consequently, although Banyumas culture is one of Javanese culture, this culture is often called by “another Javanese culture”. According to Koentjaraningrat, Banyumas culture is different from Javanese culture because of: 1) the language dialect; 2) the social organization; 3) the circle life ceremony; 4) the folklor; and 5) the art (Koentjaraningrat, 1984: 25-27).

It is known that Javanese culture has very strict culture structure and reflects feudalism values. Javanese society has social level based on the master and the servant; and the status in social system. The lower system is ordinary people (*wong cilik*) and the higher one is rulers (*penggede*) (Soemarsaid Moertono, 1985:19). This kind of structure is almost the same as Sundanese as it is divided into: 1) high level (*kaum menak*); 2) middle level (*kaum santana*); 3) low level (*kaum somah and cacah*) (Nina Lubis, 1998:135). The social status in Sundanese was created after Sunda was conquered by Java Kingdom (Mataram Kingdom) in 17th century.

In Javanese society with strict social system and feudalism values, women's destiny is determined mainly by how women obey their husband. That is why, there are many obstacles which are caused by cultural and institutional system faced by women to get important roles in any sectors (Scholten, 1992, Berninghausen, 1999, in Abdullah, 2006). There are many lessons which must be learned by women taught in *Serat Cendarini*, *Serat Wulangputri*, dan *Serat Centhini*. This also happens in Sundanese society as the role of women determined by social class, namely, *menak*, *santana*, and *somah*. Aristocrat women are women with privilege right, while *somah* women are ordinary people (Nina Lubis, 1998). This reflection of women can be seen *Sejarah Sukapura*, *Wawasan Carios Munada*, *Wawasan Sajarah Galuh*, dan *Sajarah Cikundul*. However, previously, Sunda that time or *Sunda Wiwitan* (before Mataram Kingdom conquered Sunda), according to Cecep Permana, which was not influenced by Javanese culture, had equal culture values. This equality can be seen in Sundanese culture and Baduy (society in Lebak regency, West Java) culture. The form of these cultures can be seen through the equal relation between women and men as illustrated in *Ambuand Nyai Pohaci* concept (Cecep Eka Permana, 2005: 67-70).

In another hand, Banyumas society does not have any clear social status. In that kind of situation, one dominant characteristic of the society is a society with egalitarian which is quite different from a society with strict social status because of feudalism. This Banyumas society has *cablaka or blakasuta* characteristic. This characteristic which is difficult to be changed is the main characters of Banyumas people (Sugeng Priyadi, 2005). From *cablaka* or *blakasuta* character, egalitarianism and freedom are represented. Moreover, the language of Banyumas called by *ngapak-ngapak* does not reflect social status, while Javanese language which is divided into several level, such as, *ngoko*, *kromo* and *kromo inggil*, represents social status. Besides that, the vocabulary of Banyumas language are influenced by Sundanese language shown

by suffix “a” in Banyumas language and names of places in Banyumas which are from Sundanese names.

A Study done by Sofa Marwah et. al. (2013) finds that Women in Banyumas have important roles. As society which has customs and cultures, these roles of women in Banyumas society are derived from local tradition and Islam in Banyumas. The result of these describes that women and men have the same position proven by a society in *Desa Pekuncen Kecamatan Jatilawang Kabupaten Banyumas*. They are Bonokeling descent; Bonokeling is the one who spread Islam in 15th century in Jatilawang Banyumas. In Bonokeling ritual, Bonokeling decent does traditional ceremony by inserting Islamic prayers. Consequently, there is a strong mixture between Islam and *kejawen*. This society also has ancient buildings called by *bedogol* where Bonokeling leaders stay. Those leaders also lead *unggah-unggahan* ritual and *perlon ceremony in Ramadhan* month. In the ritual and ceremony, women take a part as the doers who bring food, for example, rice, side dish, and snack. The women also make traditional cloth called *lawonto* to cover the corpse.

Another society which also holds the customs and cultures is a society in *Desa Kalisalak Kecamatan Kebasen*. Kalisalak society has *Jamasan* tradition to take care *jimat* and weapon of King Amangkurat I (King of Mataram Kingdom). Every year, these *jimat-jimat* are cleaned in *Jamasan* tradition. In this kind of tradition, the gatekeeper who holds *jimat* is male. While female helps the ceremony, so it can be conducted smoothly. Besides, there are several traditions done in this ceremony; and those are *sujarahan*, *rasullan* and *jasaman jimat*. The women also take a part in this ceremony to carry out *gubrak lesung* and *rengkong* (storing rice grain) tradition.

Then, there is a society in Banyumas which holds *Islam Abo* tradition in *Desa Cikakak Kecamatan Wangon*. Every Rajab month, the society conducts *jaroh rojab* ceremony. Besides that, there are several more ceremony, for instance, *grebeg tumpeng rajaban* and *apitan* ritual. In those rituals, women have equal role with the men as the doers of the ritual and the cook of food which are eaten by the participant of the ritual. Other society group is society in *Desa Pasir Wetan Kecamatan Karanglewas*. *Pasirwetan* is the center of Islam when Islam was developed in Banyumas at the first time. That time, the figures who spread Islam in Banyumas was dominated by local elite men. However, women also had a significant role shown by they became *demangin Pasir Luhur*, such as, *Demang Saratiman*, *Demang Nur Hakim*, *Demang Maryam* (Sugeng Priyadi, 2004). Until this day, the society in *Pasir (Wetan)* practices their skill to make tool from metal (*pande besi*) and the women also involve in making the tools.

The next group which also applies customs and traditions in Banyumas is a society in *Desa Gerduren Kecamatan Purwojati*. *Gerduren* is the central place where *lengger* is practiced. *Lengger* is always related to women. The society honors *lengger* dancers, and asks those dancers to bless the society's life. Along the time, although *lengger* is not treated as media to get blessing as it is treated as an entertainment which purposes to satisfy male desire. However, until now, the society in *Desa Gerduren Kecamatan Purwojati* still believes *lengger* as great tradition. Moreover, *lengger* is still considered as women who are blessed; hence, they are asked to give their blessing to children in that society.

Finally, it can be stated that women hold equal roles, the same as men, in Banyumas tradition and customs. In these roles, women's duty to keep the continuity of customs and traditions are so significant. They have dominant roles as the doers of the traditions. Women roles as the doers can be seen as they are the doers in *unggah-unggahan*, *jaro rojab*, *gubrak lesung*, *rengkong*, *lengger*, the making of traditional cloth (*lawon*), and so on. Besides that the roles of women in Banyumas society can be observed through their roles in social and economy which have the same position as men in providing the need of their family in farmer society. In this society women have the same job as the men to earn living for their family. Women's work in rice field is also almost the same as men. Besides, the men (the husbands) in Banyumas can

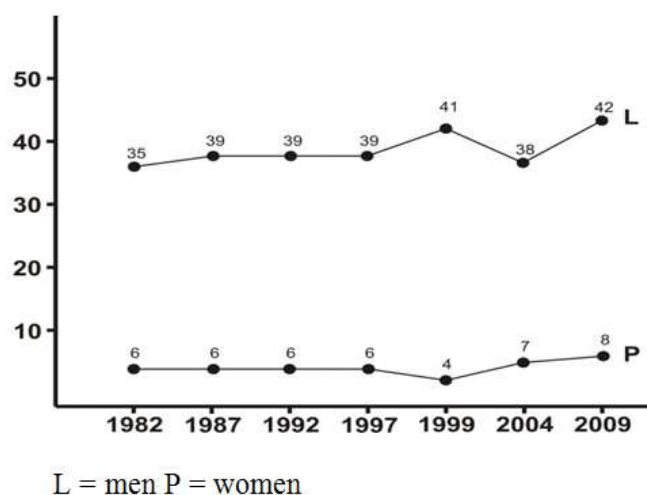
do household chores as well as the women (the wives). For example, the men can cook, clean up the bathroom, and cook rice for his family. Therefore, it can be said that this description shown how important women are in Banyumas' cultures and customs.

The Dispute of Banyumas Women's Political Roles in Local Cultures

When Indonesia is not dominated by New Order Regime, feminist figures struggle to get women acknowledgement through policies which fight for women's right related to women's representation. Thus, in 2004 general election and 2008 general election, general election policies state that women must be on the list called by Daftar Calon Tetap (DCT) at least 30%. This policy shows that the struggle has been succeeded to change women representation in parliament

The history notes that the number of women who is in parliament (DPR RI) is still low. In 1982 general election, the number of the women in parliament was 9.3%. While in 1987 general election, it increased into 11.6 % and reached 12.6 % in 1992 general election. In the last general election of New Order Regime in 1997, women representation decreased into 10.8%. In the first general election in Reform Era in 1999, women's representation decreased more into 9%. Because of the article which talks about minimum women's representation in DCT is 30%, in 2004 general election, the number of women's representation increased into 11.9% and 2009 general election, women's representation increased more into 18% (*Partisipasi Perempuan dalam Politik dan Pemerintahan*, 2010).

Meanwhile, in local level, Banyumas, the number of the women's representation from 1982 to 2004 general election are described in the following figure as follow:



Source: Sofa Marwah, 2012: 174

Figure 1: Women's Representation in DPRD Kabupaten Banyumas from 1982 General Election to 2009 General Election

Because the number of women's representation is still low in national level, this make women's representation in Banyumas is also still low. The figure illustrates the number of women's representation which is still low from one general election into others. In 1982 general lection, women's representation is 14.6 %. While, in 1987, 1992, and 1997 general election, women's representation is the same that is 13%. In 1999 general election, women's representation is 8.9%; in 2004 general election, it increases into 15.5%; and in 2009 general election, it increases into 16%.

The dispute between women's roles in politics and cultures can be observed from women's proportion in DCT party. It is shown that women representatives are put in lower list number than men's ones, so it is difficult for women's representatives to get elected. The reason why women are put in the lower list number is because of patriarchal cultures. Besides that, patriarchy also determines whether women's representatives succeed. The reason is because the supports of the father or the husband of the elected women are necessary. Moreover, if the father or the husband is the member of the parliament as they have power to influence the list of number of the woman representative in DCT.

In 2009 general election, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP), Partai Demokrat, Partai Golkar, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), Partai Gerindra, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), and Partai Hanura are parties which get position in Banyumas. Since there are only few women who work for the parties, the parties look for women representative candidate to fulfill 30% requirement of women in DCT parties.

Besides that, women who are chairwomen are a few. Thus, women are difficult to take decision in their parties as men are the decision makers. Besides, the number shown that women participation in politics is a few, the fact that women are positioned in non-strategic roles in politics is also another prove. In Banyumas, women who have strategic positions are a few. This condition is in line with a few numbers of women who are chosen to be women representatives in Banyumas.

Moreover, discriminations happen when it is about being the chairmen in the parliament or as the chairman of commission even though the regulations say that men and women have the same right to get the position as long as they are the member of the parliament. Besides that, some of women who are the members of the parliament only give little contribution in meeting discussing policies in Banyumas. These women do not always fight their right since they are representatives of their parties or region. Ironically, there are women who do not think that they are the representative of women.

The explanation shows that the position of women in Banyumas who have the same position as men are not reflected in politics. Politics is still men's world. Moreover there is not any the head of regency who are women. According to Pierre Bourdieu, the relationship between men and women which has been explained before forms social relationship between group which dominates and group which is dominated (Pierre Bourdieu, 2000). This relationship illustrates that the power of men toward women is legal. A political habitus means in politics men have general principles toward women's roles. Thus, cultural habitus as general principle supports the creation of social practice that puts women in not important roles in politics. In line with Bourdieu's explanation, gender is one of basic thing of habitus and it is called as "the gendered and gendering habitus" (in Beate Kraus, 2000: 57-58).

This dispute between women's roles and local cultures in politics in Banyumas also happens in West Sumatra society. In this society, women are important as they are influenced by matriarchal that places women as *limpapeh rumah gadang* and *bundo kanduang*. However, in politics, men are still dominant. Politics is for men; hence, women are difficult to compete with men in politics. In other words, women representations in politics are still low, and it is not equal with the total number of women and the regions. This is because in west Sumatra, local cultures and politics are separated. That is why, even though matrilineal place women in important position, their representations in politics are still low (Lince Magriasti, 2005; Lena Verayanti, 2003).

Related to dispute between women's role in politics and local cultures, figures in Banyumas believe that the true of cultural values in Banyumas respect women's right. The values are reflected in the explanation about women in cultural ceremonies in Banyumas. Besides, there are many traditional expressions which are expressed by Banyumas society which show that Banyumas society compliments women as mothers. The figures also consider that patriarchal in the development of social and politics in Banyumas society is influenced by Javanese cultures. One of the examples of patriarchal conducted in Banyumas which is influenced by Javanese cultures is described on documents showing that women never mentioned by their own names. The use of the name is something important and in cultural context (Katryn Woodward, 1999: 2); therefore, when women are called by their husband's names, this prove shows that women are not represented in history of Banyumas.

CONCLUSIONS

If we pay attention on cultural system of Banyumas society, it can be seen that women's roles in that society are so unique, and they are full of dispute. The description of women's role and men's roles in cultures and customs in Banyumas shows that women's role in Banyumas' cultures and customs is not inferior. However, there is not any female who become the head of this regency which shows that in this case women are not in the important position. It also happens in the form of not admitting women identity in documents showing the development of social politics in Banyumas.

Different from the last statement in the previous statement, local figures still believe that the true Banyumas cultures contain values that honor women. Thus, it can be said that Javanese cultures tend to give more impact toward Banyumas one. While, Sundanese cultures, in this case *Sunda Kuno* cultures, do not give significant influence on women's role because this cultures is disappearing as Javanese feudalism getting stronger. Consequently, women in Banyumas experience patriarchal domination because of Javanese feudalism which influences the way to see women's role and women's position based on the tradition of Javanese values.

The color of patriarchy in Banyumas cultures also influences the reason why women participations are low as the board in a party, the representative in general election, or a member in parliament. Hence, although the policy to allow women to be representatives increases into 30%, women who are elected are still low. This may because they are placed in DCT, at numbers that do not give any advantage to these women to get elected. Besides that women who get necessary positions, for example, as the chairwoman of parliament, as the chairwoman of commission, or as any chairwoman, are a few. Moreover women participation in discussing and deciding policies are also still low. Furthermore, there are women who still do not comprehend their roles as women representatives.

Therefore, even though Banyumas cultures are influenced by patriarchy system which does not support women to representatives, there is still space for women to participate and succeed in politics. This is because although patriarchy colors Banyumas cultures, this color causes Banyumas cultures are unique as women are provided room to grow to do their duty in politics. As far as women fulfill the requirements as good representatives, they are going to be given certain position in a party or to be chosen as the representatives. This reality is shown that patriarchy in Banyumas is relative patriarchy which allows women to give their participation in politics. Finally, it can be concluded that patriarchy which colors Banyumas cultures is not as strong as patriarchy which colors Javanese and Sundanese cultures.

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